

## Racial and ethnic differences in the transition to college

*Racial and ethnic differences in college enrollment rates reflect differences in access to and persistence in higher education for groups with varying social and economic backgrounds. Differing enrollment rates are also an indicator of future differences in the earnings and productivity associated with postsecondary education. The college enrollment rates for 18- to 24-year-olds are influenced by the number who enroll immediately after completing high school, the number who delay entry, and the number of years individuals in both these groups stay in higher education.*

- In 1997, white high school completers ages 18–24 were more likely to be enrolled in college (46 percent) than their black and Hispanic counterparts, although blacks and Hispanics ages 18–24 showed similar rates of college enrollment (39 and 36 percent, respectively). In contrast, in the mid- to late 1970s, white, black, and Hispanic completers showed similar rates of college enrollment.
- The percentage of high school completers ages 18–24 who were enrolled in college was higher in 1997 than in 1972. In 1997, college enrollment rates for whites, blacks, and Hispanics were 14, 12, and 10 percentage points higher, respectively, than they were in 1972.
- In 1997, college enrollment rates in 2-year institutions were similar for white, black, and Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24. In contrast, black and Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24 were less likely than their white counterparts to be enrolled in 4-year institutions (see supplemental table 54-1).
- In 1997, college enrollment rates were similar for white, black, and Hispanic high school completers ages 25–34 (9 percent for both whites and blacks and 8 percent for Hispanics). The college enrollment rates of high school completers age 35 and older showed a different pattern, however, with black high school completers in this age group being slightly more likely to be enrolled in college than their white peers.

### Percentage of high school completers enrolled in college, by age and race-ethnicity: October 1972–97

October	Ages 18–24				Ages 25–34				Age 35 or older			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
1972	31.9	32.6	27.2	25.8	8.4	8.4	8.8	7.5	—	—	—	—
1974	30.5	30.6	26.2	32.3	9.3	9.1	10.8	10.0	—	—	—	—
1976	33.1	32.8	33.4	35.9	9.6	9.2	11.9	11.0	2.3	2.1	4.1	3.9
1978	31.4	31.3	29.6	27.1	9.1	8.8	10.8	10.2	2.4	2.2	3.8	4.2
1980	31.8	32.1	27.6	29.9	8.9	8.7	9.6	9.2	2.1	2.0	3.4	2.9
1982	33.0	33.3	28.1	29.2	8.9	8.7	9.6	9.7	2.2	2.1	2.7	2.9
1984	33.2	33.9	27.2	29.9	8.6	8.4	8.0	9.9	2.1	2.0	2.7	1.8
1986	34.0	34.5	28.6	29.4	8.3	7.9	7.9	10.4	2.4	2.2	3.3	3.4
1988	37.0	38.4	27.8	30.8	8.0	7.8	7.5	7.8	2.7	2.6	3.3	3.4
1990	39.0	40.3	32.4	28.4	8.6	8.7	5.9	7.0	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.9
1991	40.8	42.3	30.8	33.9	9.0	8.7	8.1	8.6	2.7	2.6	3.4	2.9
1992	41.6	42.5	33.4	36.1	8.6	8.5	6.7	8.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7
1993	41.0	42.0	32.2	34.9	8.5	8.2	8.1	9.5	2.6	2.4	3.3	3.1
1994	42.2	43.6	35.5	32.9	9.5	9.1	9.7	10.1	2.7	2.5	3.5	4.3
1995	42.1	43.7	35.2	34.9	9.4	9.3	9.1	8.0	2.6	2.4	3.5	3.8
1996	43.3	45.0	35.7	33.8	9.7	9.1	10.9	9.8	2.6	2.4	3.7	3.4
1997	44.9	46.4	39.3	35.8	9.4	9.1	9.0	7.5	2.6	2.4	3.7	2.5

— Not available.

NOTE: In 1994, the survey instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights were adjusted. See the supplemental note to *Indicator 51* for further discussion. Included in

the total but not shown separately are high school completers from other racial-ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

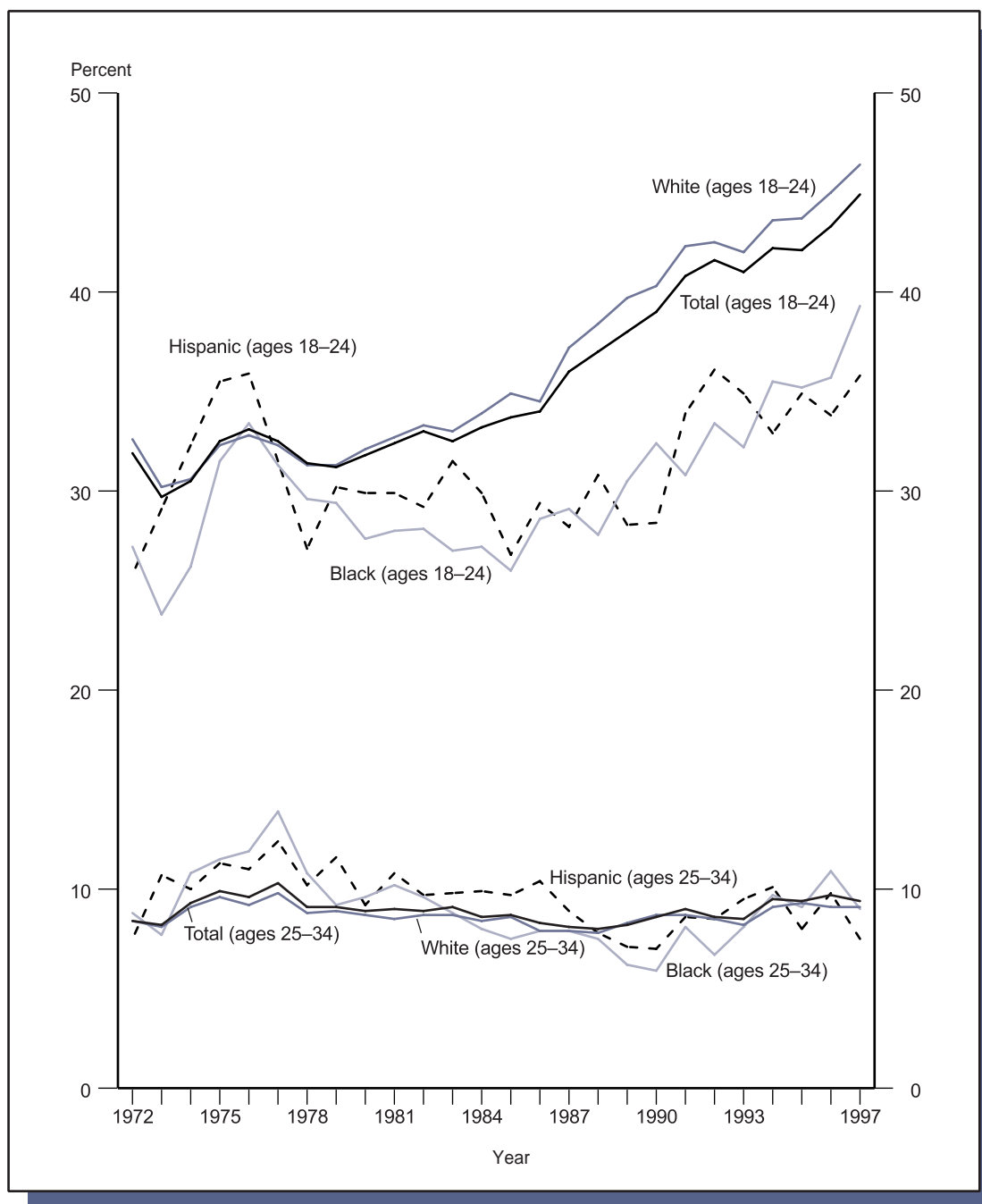
**Table S54**      **Standard errors for the text table in *Indicator 54***

October	Ages 18–24				Ages 25–34				Age 35 or older			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
1972	0.5	0.5	1.7	3.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	2.0	—	—	—	—
1974	0.5	0.5	1.6	3.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	2.2	—	—	—	—
1976	0.5	0.5	1.7	3.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.2
1978	0.4	0.5	1.6	2.9	0.2	0.3	1.0	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.2
1980	0.4	0.5	1.5	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.9	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9
1982	0.5	0.5	1.5	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.9	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9
1984	0.5	0.5	1.5	2.8	0.1	0.0	0.8	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.6
1986	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.7	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.5	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8
1988	0.6	0.6	1.7	3.3	0.2	0.3	0.8	1.5	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.9
1990	0.5	0.6	1.7	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8
1991	0.6	0.6	1.7	2.9	0.2	0.3	0.8	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7
1992	0.6	0.6	1.7	2.9	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
1993	0.6	0.6	1.7	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.8	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7
1994	0.5	0.6	1.4	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1995	0.5	0.6	1.4	1.7	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1996	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1997	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4

— Not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

**Percentage of high school completers enrolled in college,  
by age and race-ethnicity: October 1972-97**



NOTE: In 1994, the survey instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights were adjusted. See the supplemental note to *Indicator 51* for further discussion. Included in the total but not shown separately are high school completers from other racial-ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

**Table 54-1 Percentage of high school completers enrolled in college, by age, race-ethnicity, and type of institution: October 1973–97**

October	Ages 18–24				Ages 25–34				Age 35 or older			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
<b>2-year institutions</b>												
1973	6.3	6.3	4.6	9.8	2.1	2.0	2.3	3.6	—	—	—	—
1974	7.0	6.4	7.2	14.6	2.4	2.2	3.6	3.3	—	—	—	—
1975	8.1	7.7	9.3	13.6	3.0	2.7	5.2	5.5	—	—	—	—
1976	7.8	7.3	8.6	14.4	3.1	2.7	4.8	6.5	0.9	0.9	1.4	2.1
1977	8.0	7.5	9.8	13.9	3.1	2.8	5.5	4.6	—	—	—	—
1978	8.0	7.6	7.9	11.9	2.7	2.5	4.1	4.6	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.9
1979	7.6	7.1	8.4	13.3	2.6	2.4	3.2	4.4	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.6
1980	8.5	8.1	9.0	11.9	2.8	2.6	3.4	3.8	0.8	0.8	1.4	1.1
1981	9.0	8.6	7.9	14.3	2.7	2.5	3.2	4.2	0.9	0.8	1.5	2.6
1982	9.3	9.0	7.4	14.6	2.8	2.6	3.5	4.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.4
1983	8.9	8.8	7.4	12.1	2.8	2.6	3.5	5.3	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.2
1984	8.6	8.2	9.2	10.8	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.5	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.8
1985	8.6	8.3	8.4	10.5	2.8	2.7	2.7	4.1	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.1
1986	9.0	9.0	6.9	12.3	2.7	2.6	2.5	4.1	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.9
1987	9.8	9.5	8.7	12.0	2.5	2.3	2.6	3.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0
1988	10.6	10.6	7.8	13.4	2.5	2.3	3.5	3.3	0.9	0.9	1.4	1.5
1989	9.9	9.5	9.1	13.2	2.5	2.4	2.4	3.3	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.0
1990	10.5	10.2	10.6	13.2	2.8	2.7	2.7	3.5	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.9
1991	11.8	11.3	11.3	14.9	3.2	3.0	3.6	3.8	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3
1992	12.0	11.2	10.7	17.6	2.9	2.8	2.3	3.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.4
1993	11.7	11.5	9.4	16.2	2.7	2.4	3.4	4.2	1.0	0.9	1.4	1.5
1994	11.1	10.8	10.5	13.1	3.1	2.7	3.9	4.4	1.0	0.9	1.2	2.0
1995	10.9	10.2	11.2	13.5	2.7	2.5	3.6	3.0	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.7
1996	11.4	11.0	9.6	13.6	2.9	2.7	4.1	2.6	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.6
1997	11.9	11.7	10.4	13.9	2.7	2.7	3.0	1.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.3
<b>4-year institutions</b>												
1973	15.6	15.9	12.5	13.3	1.9	1.8	2.4	2.5	—	—	—	—
1974	15.6	15.9	13.6	11.8	1.8	1.6	3.2	1.8	—	—	—	—
1975	15.7	15.8	15.1	15.9	2.0	1.9	2.6	2.5	—	—	—	—
1976	24.4	24.6	23.9	19.4	6.3	6.2	6.8	3.8	1.3	1.2	2.7	1.8
1977	23.1	23.4	19.9	16.8	6.6	6.4	7.6	7.2	—	—	—	—
1978	22.6	22.9	20.8	14.5	6.1	6.0	6.0	5.4	1.4	1.3	2.0	2.4
1979	22.8	23.5	19.6	15.7	6.2	6.2	5.3	6.6	1.4	1.4	2.1	1.2
1980	22.2	23.0	17.0	16.9	5.6	5.7	5.5	4.6	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.7
1981	22.4	23.1	18.8	15.0	5.8	5.6	6.2	5.7	1.4	1.3	2.2	1.3
1982	22.7	23.4	19.5	13.6	5.8	5.8	5.6	4.5	1.3	1.2	1.7	1.5
1983	22.6	23.4	18.4	17.9	5.9	5.8	4.9	4.4	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.9
1984	23.4	24.5	16.9	17.4	5.6	5.5	4.7	6.2	1.2	1.2	1.6	0.9
1985	23.8	25.3	16.4	14.8	5.6	5.7	4.1	5.3	1.4	1.3	1.8	2.1
1986	24.2	24.7	20.7	16.3	5.3	5.1	5.0	6.0	1.4	1.3	1.9	2.3
1987	26.2	27.7	20.3	16.1	5.6	5.5	5.3	5.0	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.5
1988	26.4	27.8	20.0	17.4	5.4	5.5	3.9	4.5	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.9
1989	28.1	30.1	21.4	15.1	5.8	5.9	3.8	3.8	1.6	1.6	1.2	1.7
1990	28.4	30.2	21.8	15.1	5.8	6.1	3.3	3.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.0
1991	29.1	30.9	19.5	19.1	5.8	5.7	4.5	4.8	1.7	1.7	2.1	1.6
1992	29.6	31.3	22.7	18.5	5.7	5.6	4.4	4.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.3
1993	29.3	30.6	22.8	18.7	5.8	5.8	4.7	5.2	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.6
1994	31.1	32.8	25.1	19.8	6.5	6.4	5.8	5.7	1.7	1.6	2.3	2.3
1995	31.2	33.5	24.0	21.4	6.7	6.8	5.5	5.0	1.7	1.6	2.5	2.1
1996	31.8	34.0	26.1	20.2	6.8	6.4	6.8	7.1	1.7	1.6	2.4	1.8
1997	33.0	34.7	28.9	21.8	6.7	6.4	6.0	5.7	1.7	1.6	2.5	1.3

— Not available.

NOTE: In 1994, the survey instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS) was changed and weights were adjusted. See the supplemental note to *Indicator 51* for further discussion. Included in

the total but not shown separately are high school completers from other racial-ethnic groups.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

Table S54-1 Standard errors for table 54-1

October	Ages 18-24				Ages 25-34				Age 35 or older			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
<b>2-year institutions</b>												
1973	0.2	0.3	0.8	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.5	—	—	—	—
1974	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.4	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.3	—	—	—	—
1975	0.3	0.3	1.1	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.5	—	—	—	—
1976	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.9
1977	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.3	—	—	—	—
1978	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8
1979	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
1980	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
1981	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.8
1982	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
1983	0.3	0.3	0.9	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5
1984	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1985	0.3	0.3	0.9	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1986	0.3	0.3	0.8	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1987	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4
1988	0.4	0.4	1.0	2.4	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
1989	0.3	0.4	1.1	2.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7
1990	0.3	0.4	1.1	2.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6
1991	0.4	0.4	1.2	2.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5
1992	0.4	0.4	1.1	2.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.9	*0.0	0.1	0.2	0.5
1993	0.4	0.4	1.1	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5
1994	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.6	*0.0	*0.0	0.2	0.3
1995	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	*0.0	*0.0	0.2	0.3
1996	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	*0.0	*0.0	0.2	0.3
1997	0.3	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.4	*0.0	*0.0	0.2	0.3
<b>4-year institutions</b>												
1973	0.4	0.4	1.2	2.5	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.2	—	—	—	—
1974	0.4	0.4	1.2	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.0	—	—	—	—
1975	0.4	0.4	1.3	2.5	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.0	—	—	—	—
1976	0.4	0.5	1.5	2.6	0.2	0.2	0.9	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.8
1977	0.4	0.5	1.4	2.5	0.2	0.2	0.9	1.6	—	—	—	—
1978	0.4	0.4	1.4	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.9
1979	0.4	0.4	1.4	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.5	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.6
1980	0.4	0.4	1.3	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7
1981	0.4	0.4	1.3	2.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.6
1982	0.4	0.5	1.3	2.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7
1983	0.4	0.5	1.3	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7
1984	0.4	0.5	1.2	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1985	0.4	0.5	1.2	2.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
1986	0.4	0.5	1.4	2.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
1987	0.5	0.5	1.4	2.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1988	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.7	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
1989	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
1990	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
1991	0.5	0.6	1.4	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1992	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1993	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5
1994	0.5	0.6	1.3	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1995	0.5	0.6	1.3	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
1996	0.5	0.6	1.4	1.6	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
1997	0.5	0.6	1.4	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3

— Not available.

\* Standard errors less than 0.05 are rounded to 0.0.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.